

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 HEW-04 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07
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NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MCT-01 OPR-02
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FM USMISSION USBERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3561

INFO/AMEMBASSY BERLIN UNN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUESSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

CINCUSAEUR

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: SEDU, PORS, WB, GW

SUBJECT: STUDENT STRIKE CLOSES BERLIN UNIVERSITIES

1. SUMMARY: STRIKE OF BERLIN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, WHICH BEGAN FOUR WEEKS AGO AT FU IN CONJUNCTION WITH STUDENT BOYCOTTS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF FRG HAS NOW CAUSED VIRTUAL SHUTDOWN OF ALL BUT ONE OF LOCAL INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING. LOCAL SITUATION IS APPROACHING CLIMAX FOLLOWING STREET DISTURBANCES DEC. 6 ON FU CAMPUS. POLICE ARE FULLY MOBILIZED EXPECTING FURTHER DISORDERS. COMPLEXITY OF ISSUES INVOLVED AND UNCOMMON RESTRAINT SHOWN BY PRESS HAVE TENDED, HOWEVER, TO DEFUSE SITUATION AND TO DIVERT PUBLIC ATTENTION FROM STRIKE ISSUES. END SUMMARY.

2. ACADEMIC LIFE AT THE FREE UNIVERSITY (FU) AND AT MOST OTHER BERLIN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING HAS SLOWLY GROUND TO VIRTUAL HALT OVER PAST FEW WEEKS AS CONSEQUENCES OF THE FRG-WIDE STRIKE OF UNIVERSITY

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STUDENTS. HERE AS ELSEWHERE IN FRG PRINCIPAL ISSUES

ARE DRAFT LEGISLATION THAT WOULD PROHIBIT MEMBERS OF EXTREMIST ORGANIZATIONS FROM HOLDING PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS (BERUFSVERBOT) AND ITS SPECIFIC APPLICATION TO YOUNGER INSTRUCTORS AT THE FU, PROPOSED GOVERNMENT ECONOMY MEASURES ELIMINATING TEACHING POSITIONS AND REDUCING STUDENT SUBSIDIES AND DWINDLING PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE EMPLOYMENT IN PROFESSIONAL FIELDS. STRIKE WHICH HAS FEATURED BOYCOTT AND BLOCKING OF LECTURES AND FREQUENT MEETINGS AND PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, BEGAN FOUR WEEKS AGO AT INSTITUTE OF GERMAN STUDIES AT FU AND HAS SPREAD TO ALL OTHER DEPARTMENTS OF THE FU, TO TEACHERS COLLEGE (PAEDAGOGISCHE HOCHSCHULE). ONLY BERLIN CAMPUS RELATIVELY UNAFFECTED TO DATE BY BOYCOTT IS TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY (TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITAET), WHERE AT MEETING OF SOME 2,000 STUDENTS DEC. 7, STRIKE MOTION WAS VOTED DOWN.

3. COALITION OF LEFT EXTREMIST ORGANIZATIONS EMERGED SEVERAL WEEKS AGO TO TAKE LEAD IN DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT FOR STRIKE BUT RANGE OF ISSUES MENTIONED ABOVE HAS IN MEANTIME BROADENED APPEAL TO INCLUDE MAJORITY OF LOCAL STUDENTS. RESULT HAS BEEN THAT ACTIVITIES OF STRIKE COORDINATING COMMITTEE HAVE IN EFFECT, BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN KEEPING MOST STUDENTS AWAY FROM CLASSES, AND IN ORGANIZING ON DEC. 1 LARGEST STREET DEMONSTRATION (OVER 12,000 PARTICIPANTS) TO BE HELD IN BERLIN IN LAST TWO YEARS. THIS DEMONSTRATION AS WELL AS NUMEROUS SMALLER CONVOCATIONS AND MEETINGS CALLED BY COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS STRIKE STRATEGY, WERE FOR MOST PART PEACEFUL, BUT SPREAD OF STRIKE AND GROWING STUDENT FRUSTRATION HAVE RESULTED IN NUMEROUS CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN STUDENTS AND POLICE OVER PAST SEVERAL DAYS. APART FROM STRENGTHENED SECURITY PATROLS IN AREAS AFFECTED, HOWEVER, POLICE REMAINED AWAY FROM CAMPUSES UNTIL DEC. 2 WHEN NEW FU PRESIDENT LAEMMERT WAS FORCED TO REQUEST POLICE PROTECTION FOR THOSE MEDICAL STUDENTS WHO OPPOSED STRIKE AND EXPRESSED DESIRE TO CONTINUE THEIR ACADEMIC STUDIES IN ORDER TO RECEIVE CREDIT FOR SEMESTER'S WORK. AT LEAST FOUR FU FACULTIES ARE EFFECTIVELY CLOSED DOWN DUE TO STRIKE AND POLICE ARE NOW POSTED AT FIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FACULTIES TO ASSURE ENTRY FOR NON-PARTICIPANTS WISHING TO ATTEND LECTURES AND TO PURSUE OTHER SCHOLASTIC REQUIREMENTS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ONLY FU FACULTIES THAT HAVE VOTED AGAINST BOYCOTT ARE DENTAL, VETERINARY AND PHARMACEUTICAL DEPARTMENTS.

CLASSES AT TEACHERS COLLEGE IN STEGLITZ ARE ALMOST COMPLETELY SUSPENDED AND PRESS REPORTS THAT STRIKE LEADERS AT THAT SCHOOL FAVOR EXTENDING

STRIKE UNTIL CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS. SITUATION AT TECHNICAL ACADEMY IN FRENCH SECTOR IS SIMILAR TO THAT AT FU, I.E. LARGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ARE ON STRIKE BUT CLASSES ARE BEING CONDUCTED FOR THOSE STUDENTS, MAINLY UPPER-CLASSMEN, WISHING TO ATTEND.

4. FIRST VIOLENCE DURING STRIKE CAME DEC. 6 WHEN APPROXIMATELY 2,500 STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN UNAUTHORIZED MARCH FROM MAIN CAMPUS AREA OF FU TO ADMINISTRATION BUILDING SEVERAL BLOCKS AWAY (NEAR US ARMY HOSPITAL) PROTESTING PRESENCE OF POLICE ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUS AND DEMANDING TO SEE PRESIDENT LAEMMERT. WHEN LATTER FAILED TO RESPOND TO ULTIMATUM THAT HE APPEAR, RADICAL ELEMENTS IN CROWD FORCED THEIR WAY INTO ADMIN BUILDING, FOLLOWING WHICH POLICE MOVED IN ENERGETICALLY TO EJECT THEM. POLICE WERE FORCED TO USE THEIR TEAR-GAS AND TRUNCHEONS AFTER STUDENTS PELTED THEM WITH FLYING OBJECTS INCLUDING STONES. THIS CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE STUDENT BODY AND THE POLICE WAS THE MOST SERIOUS TO OCCUR AT FU SINCE 1973 DISORDERS IGNITED BY RESENTMENT OVER VIET NAM WAR. PRESS REPORTED TWO STUDENTS INJURED AS RESULT OF POLICE

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COUNTER-MEASURES.

5. STRIKE SITUATION IN BERLIN SEEMS TO BE HEADING FOR CLIMAX OVER NEXT FEW DAYS WITH POLICE FULLY MOBILIZED FOR WHAT MAY BE POTENTIALLY MORE SERIOUS DISORDERS. STRIKE LEADERSHIP, WHICH NOW REPRESENTS WIDE SPECTRUM OF STUDENT VIEWS, FACED WITH REACHING CRITICAL DECISION WHETHER TO PROLONG BOYCOTT AND THUS FACE POSSIBILITY OF FORFEITING ENTIRE SEMESTER'S WORK, OR TO ABANDON BOYCOTT IN FAVOR OF UNPRESURED DISCUSSIONS OF ISSUES WITH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND RESPONSIBLE SENAT OFFICIALS.

6. BEYOND CAMPUSES AND ACADEMIC CIRCLES STUDENT STRIKE DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE ATTRACTED UNUSUAL PUBLIC ATTENTION. THIS IS EXPLAINED BY COMPLEXITY OF ISSUES INVOLVED, DECIDELY SECONDARY COVERAGE DEVOTED TO STRIKE BY MEDIA, AND FACT THAT MOST BERLINERS, PERHAPS RECALLING EARLIER PERIODS OF UNLIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REST, EXPECT STUDENTS TO BE REBELLIOUS AND THEREFORE CONSIDER RELATIVELY TRANQUIL SITUATION PREVAILING ON CAMPUSES PAST 5:6J&I/DOO HAVE BEEN UNNATURAL. EXERCISING UNCOMMON RESTRAINT, LOCAL PRESS HAS RELEGATED STRIKE TO BACK PAGE ARTICLES WHICH IN GENERAL HAVE ANALYSED BACKGROUND AND ISSUES INVOLVED, AND TREATED POLICE INVOLVEMENT LOW-KEY AND FACTUALLY. ALTHOUGH LARGE RESERVE FORCES HAVE BEEN PLACED ON ALERT FOR NECESSARY COMMITMENT TO UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES, POLICE THEMSELVES AT LEAST UNTIL CONFRONTATION THAT OCCURRED DEC. 6, HAVE TAKEN RELATIVELY RELAXED ATTITUDE TOWARD STRIKE. THEY HAVE STRESSED TO US THAT UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS PRECLUDE THEIR ENTERING SCHOOL FACILITIES OR BECOMING MORE DIRECTLY INVOLVED WITHOUT PRIOR INVITATION FROM UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES.

7. STRIKE HAS COINCIDED WITH INSTALLATION OF NEW FU PRESIDENT EBERHARDT LAEMMERT, WHO HAS CONFINED HIMSELF TO BEHIND-THE-SCENES ACTIVITIES AND CONCILIATORY STATEMENTS. SPEAKING DEC 1 ON OCCASION OF 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF FU'S PRESTIGIOUS OST INSTITUT, LAEMMERT CAUTIONED STUDENTS AGAINST ACTIONS THAT WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF PARALYZING THE WORK OF THE UNIVERSITY. ON DEC . 6 IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

DISTURBANCE NOTED ABOVE, LAEMMERT MET WITH 2,500 STUDENT PROTESTORS AT MAIN AUDITORIUM OF FU APPEALING TO THEM TO RETURN TO THEIR STUDIES AND TO RENOUNCE VIOLENCE. THE FU PRESIDENT TOLD THE ASSEMBLED STUDENTS THAT THEIR DEMANDS FOR REFORM MUST BE PURSUED WITHIN THE SOCIAL SYSTEM AND BY USING THEIR HEADS AND NOT THEIR FISTS. FURTHERMORE, HE STRESSED THAT PUBLIC HAS LITTLE UNDERSTANDING FOR STUDENTS WHO REMAIN AWAY FROM THEIR CLASSES FOR WEEKS AT A TIME, WHEN THERE IS SUCH A HIGH RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG YOUTH. LIKE HIS PREDECESSOR, LAEMMERT HAS BEEN MOST RELUCTANT TO INVITE POLICE TO MAINTAIN ORDER ON FU CAMPUSES AND WE BELIEVE HE FINALLY DID SO WHEN ONLY ALTERNATIVE WOULD HAVE BEEN TO FORCE NON-STRIKING STUDENTS TO FORFEIT CREDIT FOR ENTIRE SEMESTER. AS IT IS, POLICE PRESENCE ON CAMPUSES IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STRICTLY LIMITED TO BREAKING UP UNAUTHORIZED ASSEMBLIES WHICH THREATEN TO BECOME VIOLENT, AND TO KEEPING ENTRY WAYS TO LECTURE HALLS OPEN; ACTUAL ADMITTANCE OF STUDENTS TO BUILDINGS HOWEVER, IS CONTROLLED BY UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS.

8. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS WITHIN PAST TWO WEEKS SENAT OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS, SENATOR GERT LOEFFLER (SPD), HAS VISITED CAMPUSES FOR LOW-KEY INFORMATIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH BOTH STUDENTS AND ADMINISTRATION. IN AN OPEN LETTER TO THE STUDENTS DEC. 7, LOEFFLER EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING FOR STUDENTS' CONCERNS AND NOTD CONSIDERABLE SOCIAL EFFORTS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO ASSURE STUDENTS A MORE CONFIDENT FUTURE. LOEFFLER HAS ALSO WRITTEN TO CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT REQUESTING THAT HE URGENTLY REVIEW THE SECTIONS OF THE FEDERAL EDUCATION LAW DEALING WITH STUDENT SUBSIDIES. LOEFFLER POINTED OUT TO CHANCELLOR THAT THE DELAY IN UNDERTAKING THIS REVIEW HAS LED TO STUDENT HARDSHIPS WHICH NEEITHER WERE INTENDED NOR CAN BE JUSTIFIED FROM THE STAND-POINT OF EDUCATION POLICY.

9. CDU ACADEMICS EXPERT IN BERLIN OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FRAU DR. BESSER, HAS APPEALED TO STUDENTS NOT TO FOLLOW BOYCOTT APPEALS EVEN IF THEIR CONCERN OVER ALLOTMENT OF UNIVERSITY SLOTS AND FUTURE JOB POSSIBILITIES SEEM TO JUSTIFY STRIKE ACTION. ILLEGAL STRIKES, CDU SPOKESMAN SAID ARE THE MOST INAPPROPRIATE MEANS FOR EFFECTING POLITICAL SOLUTIONS. BOYCOTT WILL BE DEBATED IN BERLIN HOUSE DEC 8 AT REQUEST OF CDU FRAKTION. SENAT PLANS TO DEFEND

ACTIONS OF POLICE AND PRESIDENT LAEMMERT AS BEING
MOST REASONABLE MEANS OF REACTING TO STUDENT DIS-
CONTENT AS IT HAS THUS FAR MANIFESTED ITSELF.
GEORGE

NOTE BY OC/T: PARA 6 AS RECEIVED.

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